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**Massoretic Investigations.**

*Masoretische Untersuchungen.* By Dr. LUDWIG BLAU, Professor at the Rabbinical School of Budapest. (Strassburg: 1891.)

MUCH has been done lately for the advancement of the study of the Massorah, by Dr. Ginsburg in this country and Dr. S. Baer in Germany. The JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW published in its first year an able essay by the Rev. Isidore Harris, but no one has as yet found out that the authorised Massorah, if we may employ this expression, is not reliable at all, a subject which Professor Blau lays before us in his monograph. He tries to prove that the Massorites did not understand the earliest tradition for the Biblical text which is contained in the Siphre and the Talmud. If Professor Blau is right, and we believe he is, the authority of the Massorah recepta is broken. In the first instance, our author treats of the points above words, which indicate an elimination. Thus in Numbers iii. 39 the וְאֶהְרֵן has no right to be there, according to the Siphre. The Massorah puts, by misunderstanding the Siphre, a point only on the ו of וְאֶהְרֵן, which gives no sense in the text. More striking is the nonsense the Massorah makes of the passage Gen. xviii. 9. The Siphre says that the word אֵינָהּ is provided with points of elimination, since the angels knew where Sarah was. Some texts make the elimination in the word אֵלֶּי, some for the whole word, and some others keep the ל only. The words in the Siphre and other sources, viz., "For they know where Sarah was," can only mean the elimination of אֵינָהּ, "where." Professor Blau proposes to make sense in the Biblical passage after the elimination of the word "where," which we cannot consider satisfactory. According to our opinion, the passage would read as follows:—"And they said unto him, Behold, Sarah thy wife is in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return," etc. The same is the case with the word רַחֲקָה (Numbers ix. 10; JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, I., p. 133), where the old tradition eliminates the entire word, and not the ה only, which gives no sense.

Of course we cannot reproduce all the passages quoted by the Professor. We shall only mention the gem of the monograph, viz., his discussion of the reversed נ in Numbers x. 35, 36, which means nothing else but the abridged form of נִקְרָה "pointed." The points having been too many for two verses, the two נ at beginning and end took their place. This is the true explanation, which no one noticed before our author, although it is as simple as the egg of Columbus. In fact, the expression reversed *nun* is a late one; the earlier tradition has נִקְרָה, as Professor Blau shows. The author of the tractate *Soferim* had probably a MS. before him in which spaces were marked before

35 and after 36 ; therefore he recommends a שִׁעוֹר, "space." (That is the right reading in a Bodleian MS., instead of the incomprehensible שִׁפּוֹר in our text, which Dr. Joel Müller, in his excellent edition of this treatise, ingeniously proposed.)

The next part in Professor Blau's monograph has for object the pendent letters (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, I., p. 137), which is followed by a chapter on the *Tikkune Soferim*, of which the earlier documents count eleven, while later on we find mentioned eighteen. Raym. Martini, for instance (*Pugio Fidei*, p. 277, ed. Carpzov), mentions an unknown *Tikkun* for Ps. xxii. 17, which was used as an argument to brand him as a forger (*The Expositor*, 1888, Third Series, Vol. VII., p. 183) ; but from the variations found in different documents on this subject it is highly probable that Martini copied from a genuine text. In the sixth part our author treats of the words written otherwise than read, and in the last he gives explanations of Massoretic notes quoted in the Midrashim.

We hope that Professor Blau will continue his ingenious Massoretic investigations, for if he has succeeded in shaking the foundation of the Massorah, he ought to try to repair the breach by a new construction.

A. NEUBAUER.

#### Eldad the Danite.

*Eldad ha-Dani seine Berichte über die zehn Stämme und deren Ritus in verschiedenen Versionen nach Handschriften und alten Drucken mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen nebst einem Excurse über die Falascha und deren Gebräuche* von ABRAHAM EPSTEIN. Pressburg : 1891 (in Hebrew, and with a Hebrew title also), published by Herr Lippe, Wien.

THE author of this interesting and learned monograph is not a stranger in the field of Rabbinical literature. Besides his essays on the *Midrash Rabbathi* and the *Pugio Fidei*, on the *Book of the Jubilees* (of which the first part appeared in the *Revue des Etudes Juives*, t. xxi., p. 80, sqq.), and many others of minor importance, Herr Epstein is the author of a remarkable book on Jewish antiquities, entitled, *Beiträge zur Jüdischen Alterthumskunde I.* (Wien : 1887), of which we regard his present book as a second instalment ; indeed, we are astonished that the learned author has not described it as such on the title-page. The present work is composed of three essays. The first treats of the diary of the famous Eldad the Danite, which Herr